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Calvin Paxton's Patmos

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Calvin Paxton's Patmos

...BY...

JAMES H. McLAREN

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JAMES H. McLAREN

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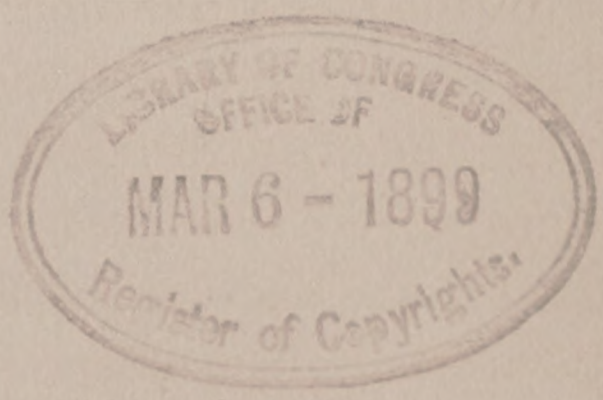

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Calvin Paxton's Patmos.

CHAPTER I.

The Rev. Calvin Paxton is seated in his elegant study, the place which of all others he most loved to be. It is a large upper room in the auspacious parsonage adjoining the historic Old North Church; in from the noise and bustle of the busy streets quiet, but never lonely. For books are the Doctor's dearest friends, and his communion with master spirits is real and sweet.

The night is bleak and keen; the cold wind is playing its mournful dirge in the branches of those mighty trees which adorn the lovely Mansion Park. The starlight is sparkling upon the air and the pale moonbeams streaming through the drifting clouds fall dim and soft on the cold white earth. The great city shines in her electric beauty as if she had donned her evening dress, bedecked with myriad diamonds; and the night, is grander than the day.

Streams of busy life are pouring to and fro. Some are happy, but more are sad. Cold is the bitterest enemy of the poor, and in that great center of extremes, many are cold, cheerless and weary of life. But Paxton is warm and happy; so likewise are his flock—safe

folded and at rest. He is pastor of the wealthiest church in America. His wife is the daugther of the strongest supporter, one of the richest men in the world. Therefore why should Paxton be other than happy? Why should the poor, cold world trouble him? He has plenty and his people are not in need. If they were poor and suffering, why that would be another matter and he might feel quite different; but they are not so; all are rich and none are poor. Therefore Paxton's mind is free to enter upon those intellectual pursuits which he so dearly loves. The poor and their needs, however, are by no means ignored by either the pastor or his people. But both realize that their work is of another type. Every preacher hath his work and every church its sphere. Paxton was not the preacher of the poor—his church was not their home. At times it grieved him to think that this was so, for he was a good man, conscientious and true to his convictions.

"Only two days to Christmas, and the sermon scarce begun," he reflects, glancing at the skeleton of what was meant for one of his greatest sermons, and then at the backs of several theological works which adorned the shelves above his desk. "I must allow no further interruptions," thought he, "Until after the Holidays, for this year I desire to unfold the doctrine of the Incarnation clearer and in more convincing form than ever before, and there is no time to do this like Christmas, the birthday of Christ."

With such thoughts in mind, the Rev. Calvin Paxton

seated himself at his oak-desk, pulled down several of the great, time honored, but somewhat antiquated theological works, adjusted his gold bows, and buried his thought in the theme which was the dearest of all to him—the mystery of the Incarnation. His aim was to prove by the best authorities in all ages that God was actually in Christ and lived in the world as a man; that the doctrine, although mysterious, is not impossible, and in no way belittling to the Almighty. Some of his illustrations are convincing, even beautiful. "It is not belittling to the great sun in the heavens," he argues, "that its wondrous beams, which brighten the face of the ocean and clothe the mountains in splendor, shine also upon the tinest flower that hangs on its slender neck. Nay—but it is an enlargement of the sun and adds to his greatness. It is not a belittling of the Father, even though He be the Ruler of nations, if still he condescends to give special care to his smallest and weakest child—it is an enlargement of the Father. "And thus," he declares, "the Incarnation—God in human form—is an enlargement of God."

These were, perhaps, the most practical illustrations that Paxton had ever thought out, for he was anything but a practical man. He was pre-eminently a theologian, one of the straigthest sect—an orthodox of the orthodox. His studies, his sermons, and his writings were strictly along doctrinal lines, dry, hard and dead. Indeed, this was the only objection that a number of his more progressive people (secretly of course)

offered to his sermons. They were scholarly but lifeless and born of the seventeenth century theology. No one, objected however openly, for it was a long standing tradition of the Old North Church, that it never openly opposed a preacher, nor turned one away—a record of which any church might well be proud, and to whose service any true man would joyfully consecrate every power of his being. But Calvin Paxton was undoubtedly a great man and a leader of the conservative wing of his school. Every one knew that he had declined two flattering calls to fill professor's chairs, prefering his position as pastor of the Old North, to that of a professorship, even in a theological seminary. For was not he the preacher to the faculty and students of a great university? Paxton was not ignorant of the fact that to a majority of his hearers his preaching seemed to be far behind the times and unprofitable. But he was conscientious in it. This they knew, and for this reason they respected him while dissenting from his theology.

Dr. Paxton was not, therefore, the happiest of mortals. In his soul there was an empty, aching void which theology did not seem to fill or books to satisfy. There was a felt absence of that power which he had sought so long and dilligently to obtain—how to help man in his deeper need. Paxton had at times experienced deep consciousness of this lack of power, but never quite so keenly as he had since his old friend and class-mate, Rev. William Wholeheart, had responded to Paxton's pressing invitation and preached in the Old North

Church. Paxton was so impressed by that sermon that he could not cease thinking about it.

Rev. William Wholeheart, although a class-mate of Dr. Paxton, and many years his senior, was a remarkably quiet man and obscure. The little parish of Lone Valley, where he had been settled ever since ordination, was some fifteen miles from the city. His grandparents were quakers, and even in his student days William manifested a decided leaning in that direction. He always made use of the personal pronouns "Thee and thou," and for this reason he received from his classmates the title "Quaker William," a title which, however, he seemed rather to enjoy.

It was only after much pursuasion that William Wholeheart consented to occupy the pulpit of his distinguished class-mate and friend, for he felt that he would be decidedly out of place in such surroundings. But Dr. Paxton who knew his abilities as a scholar and a thinker and who had so loved and honored him in college on account of his beautiful character, his uncommon kindness of heart, was far from agreeing with him. For this kind act Paxton was more than repaid in seeing the wonderful effect of his friend's preaching upon the great congregation. By the simple, yet beautiful words, so earnestly spoken by the quiet, unassuming man, he won all hearts to himself, and especially Paxton's, who, from beginning to end, sat with his eyes riveted in loving admiration upon his old friend and class-mate. The audience was equally impressed.

President Ellery, of Hadding University, with several of the Professors and students, would not leave the church until they had made the acquaintance and clasped hands with this great, good man.

His theme was the nature and locality of heaven. He called attention first to the material heavens which the big telescopes reveal, and declared that upon no sphere in the great universe, however boundless or beautiful, can heaven be discovered or ever realized until it is first experienced and known within the little sphere of the human heart. Thus he located heaven—not upon some world in space, but in the heart which loves and serves God because it loves and serves man who is a child of God. Then in words of strength and beauty he proceeded to unfold the qualities of life and traits of character which make heaven here and hereafter. "As the ocean is known by a single drop," he said, "and the light of the universe by a single beam, so heaven is known by those little tear drops of sympathy which glisten on the face which reflects another's grief. And those sweet little sun beams of loving kindness which stream with warmth and beauty from eyes of tenderness and love and enter into the hearts that are aching and sad." Then he closed by affirming that this most precious of all blessings can come not through learning nor through books, but only in one way, the lowly way of loving obedience and deeds of kindness.

This sermon made a lasting impression upon Dr. Paxton. Day by day he felt more keenly the fact that

his life was an empty void and that something for which he longed was surely lacking. So deeply was he impressed with this thought, that at last he wrote to his old and long trusted friend, describing his feeling and asking Wholeheart to tell him the secret of his power and how he had acquired it.

No sooner had Paxton become absorbed in his theme than he heard a gentle tapping upon his study door—his wife's familiar knock. "A message of importance thought he—for his study was like an impregnable fortress, closely guarded by his talented wife." "A note, my dear, from Prof. Hammond," said Mrs. Paxton approaching her husband's desk. "It is quite important and he is awaiting your reply; that is why I ventured to disturb you." Prof. Hammond was one of Doctor and Mrs. Paxton's most intimate and highly respected friends, and therefore the intrusion was excusable.

Paxton took the note from his wife's hand and read as follows: "Dear Pastor and friend—Please pardon this infringement upon your study hours which I find myself unable to avoid. For some time we have been desirous of creating an interest in the work of our Sunday School. To this end we wish this year to make our Christmas concert one of more than ordinary interest. The Sunday School, including myself, especially desire that you shall give us a fifteen minutes' talk at the concert. We shall all be greatly pleased to have your presence and the fact that you may speak, will I am sure, add much to the interest of the occasion.

Hoping for a favorable reply at once, as we must make up our program to-night. I am dear pastor. Yours in the cause.—J. C. Hammond.

P. S.—It has been suggested that the talk he practical rather than doctrinal; but this, of course, is only a suggestion. The theme of our concert is the Angelic Visitants.—J. C. H.

It was the words in the postscript, "It has been suggested that the talk be practical rather than doctrinal," which especially arrested Paxton's attention and seemed to disturb him not a little. He had always known that his preaching had been dogmatic, especially for the younger and more progressive element of his church, and this frank suggestion from the Sunday School, through Prof. Hammond, seemed like a straw, telling him which way the current of feeling was setting. He noticed too, that his good wife blushed slightly as he read these words, but she made no comment. "A practical talk to the Sunday School," said Paxton to his wife: "Surely my people should know by this time that I am not a practical talker. I only wish that I could be," he said thoughtfully. "It has recently become the regret of my life that I so lack the power of speaking along more practical lines and——" "But, my dear, it will not do to refuse Prof. Hammond. You know he is one of our dearest friends, one on whom we especially rely. Think of all that he has done in the interest of the Sunday School. Is it not an inspiring example to us all that one so talented, one holding a chair so

important in a great university should give so much of his precious time and thought to the work of a Sunday School?" "I know, my dear, I know, but——" "I have it Calvin," interrupted Mrs. Paxton, whose thought was so active in her husband's welfare that his last words were unnoticed. "You notice by the postscript that the theme is "The Angelic Visitants." Now in your practical talk just state the purpose of the Angel's visit—state that it was an extraordinary vision—a vision of angels for an extraordinary purpose — to proclaim to the world the birth of the Redeemer of mankind. Then in the second place, call attention to the fact that this wonderful manifestation was made not to the great rulers of nations, nor in a brilliant city, but rather to the humble shepherds upon the lowly plain—just ordinary men about their ordinary duty, and not thinking at all of the vision of angels. Then state that many of heaven's grandest visions have been revealed to the faithful and lowly, and that still the grandest, the greatest blessings of heaven, come to those who are faithfully performing the humblest tasks of life and the hardest labor of the world in its most obscure corners.." "Beautiful, Alice, beautiful, your words impress me deeply. You really ought to be the preacher. I will go to work on this outline at once"—and Mrs. Paxton, whose face was radiant with delight, conscious that she had scored a triumph, withdrew.

CHAPTER II.

When Mrs. Paxton passed out of the study, the Doctor noticed some letters which she had placed upon the correspondence desk and he proceeded to examine them. The Doctor's correspondence was quite extensive. He did not read or answer all the letters that came to him, but upon one of the envelopes he noticed the stamp, "Lone Valley" and recognized the handwriting of his old friend, Wholeheart. This letter, which he prized more than all the others, Paxton took to his table. Running the blade of his gold handled paper cutter through the envelope, he opened and read as follows: My dear and honored brother: Thy valued letter permits me to do what I long have desired to do, namely, cast off restraint and talking with thee heart to heart. Thou hast asked for the secret of my success. I do not know that I am successful, but in so far as this may be so, there is no secret. My life, however, has long been consecrated to humanity. God has placed me in the furnace and left me in it for a purpose which is becoming clearer as the years creep on. This is the kind of training, my dear brother, which thou hast not received. Thy divinity needs humanizing, thy theology needs the coloring of blood. This thou wilt never receive from books, of which I know thou art a master. I had no success in my work until I changed divinity for humanity. I now get my divinity in the homes of the poor—the media of my inspiration is the little willow

basket which always accompanies me to the places where the hungry bodies be, and this leads me, to the hungry soul. Thou knowest, dear brother, how this change has come to me. I need not tell thee of it (He refered to the great losses and sorrows which had come into his life and which had bent and bowed him to the ground. But these trials had moulded him and while he was poor in earthly things, he had grown rich in heavenly treasures.) Of course I do not wish thee trials and sorrows such as mine have been, dear brother, but the boon which thou art seeking, namely, power to reveal the Christ life to the world, will never come to thee through books or creeds or systems of theology to which thy mind and soul seem to be chained. Only in the path of humble and loving duty canst thou obtain this precious gift. Close the book of dogma and open the Book of Life. Those bodies of theology are dead, and from them the breath of life has departed. Only out of the loving heart that ministers unto the needs of others, can come the food of the spirit and the life of God.

If the path of duty opens to thee, dear Calvin, either in the way of departure from old lines, or of self-sacrificing service to the suffering, or whatever way it comes, walk in it, I beg of thee. It will be thy heavenly vision. and if thou wilt obey it, great will be thy power and sweet thy reward. If it leads into the way of trial and suffering, let me remind thee, that the pearl that flashed so beautifully in thy loved ones brooch, was perfected by pain, and the sweet music which came from the piano

in thy parlor at the touch of her fingers, is sweet because the sounding board was made from wood which grew not in the quiet and shady valley, but the tree which grew on the bleak hillside, and whose fibers were disciplined and rendered musical by the swaying of the tempests which beat upon it. The playing of my organist was, for a long time, technically perfect, but lifeless, until God placed her in the furnace of affliction, and now we be hearing heaven in every sweep of the keys.

Study humanity, dear Calvin, instead of books, which at best are only blocks of cold type and bloodless. And thus wilt thou come to love the lives that cling to thee, and thine own life will become a greater blessing to the world.

I should ask thy forgiveness for writing my superior in this fashion if thou hadst not so kindly invited me to do so. In loving interest.—William Wholeheart."

These beautiful words, so forcibly put, impressed Paxton even more than did Wholeheart's sermon. Influenced by them, he went to work immediately upon the outline suggested by his brilliant wife, and his success was far beyond his expectation. Never before had he so realized, though only in vision, the divinity of service and the sacredness of duty, and it was on these points that he dwelt at length and with profit. This reminded him, too, of one of the beautiful sayings of Thomas à Kempis, in substance, that insight power and blessings come to those who lovingly minister unto the needs of the lowly. "Yes," thought he, "that is true

as it is beautiful, as are also the words of William. But it does not seem to be my mission in life. I really have no poor or suffering ones here to be ministered unto. Indeed, I never have had, and perhaps," he reflected, "this has been my loss." "But," thought he, "if only I am faithful in my ministry to the higher classes, and if only I can do something to hold the world to a true standard of doctrine, from which, alas, it is fast drifting, shall I not have done my duty, as well as the missionary to the heathen, the worker in the slums, or even dear William in his lonely vale. But O, though he, if I could only unfold the vision of the Christ life, as for years I have longed to do, and as beautifully as my brother William unfolded it, how happy, indeed, I would be!" And this had been Paxton's deepest desire for many years, namely, to unfold the doctrine of the Incarnation, and on this subject he had written many leading articles which had attracted wide attention. But he was almost destitute of the imaginative faculty, which was to him a source of constant regret. He was indebted to books and systems of theology for almost everything that he had produced.

Rising to replace a volume, his eyes fell upon large headlines in the Evening Record announcing another disaster upon Beacon Island. Some of the boatmen had lost their lives in attempting to cross Peril Reef—a broad sheet of water with a deep channel in the middle, which separated the island from the mainland. Therefore all communication with the island was cut off.

The words "BEACON ISLAND" suddenly brought

Paxton face to face with a sense of long neglected duty. "Ah," he reflected, "I thought that all my people were wealthy and at ease, but it is not so. There is at least one sweet soul who is poor—very poor, possibly destitute." He was thinking of Anna Bennington Bryne. She had been his dearest friend in former years; a school-mate and most intimate companion of his wife. But at that time she was an only daughter of Jacob G. Bennington, a wealthy business man, and a prominent member of the Old North Church. But through a most unfortunate complication of circumstances, over which he had no control, and for which he was not responsible, Bennington went down, and all his earthly possessions with him. He was then thrown out upon a cold and a very different kind of world. No longer at home in the Old North Church, where the poor and unfortunate never felt quite at ease, he gradually drifted away until at last, in the City Hospital, he died of a broken heart, and no one seemed to care. Anna, his beautiful daughter, was likewise peculiarly unfortunate, for, while the man whom she married was strictly honorable, true and good, and very well to do at the time of their marriage, he also, through unfortunate speculation, was deprived of all his worldly possessions. Driven by force of circumstances, he became a light-house keeper on Beacon Island. There, upon that lonely speck in the angry waters, where the monotony was broken only by the moaning and sighing of the billows upon the rocks and beach, Bryne, with his lovely bride spent sev-

eral long years, and there, also, two sweet children were born to them.

Paxton recalled the sad fact that only one year ago that noble and heroic husband, David Bryne, had lost his life in attempting to rescue the crew of the sinking ship, Waldo, which was owned by Deacon Waldo, of the Old North Church. Calvin remembered the great source of encouragement which Anna Bennington had been to him in former days. He remembered the time when he loved her above all others, the time when her refusal of marriage well nigh broke his heart. And had it not been for the great influence of her father, would he indeed occupy the grand position which he now held? But these were in the days of her prosperity. When Anna Bennington became poor and was forced out upon the unsympathetic world, and Alice Brownlow, now Paxton's wife, became wealthy, all was changed. But he knew they had pledged eternal friendship to each other in the days gone and had even planned to share each others fortunes.

The consciousness of duty so long neglected, smote his heart and pierced his blood. On Paxton's brow the perspiration stood out like beads. Just then the great organ began to peal forth its richest, sweetest tones, and music wondrously beautiful filled all the place. It was choir practice and the music was Christmas music. Artists of renown were in that choir, and its fame had spread far and wide. But to-night the music, although unusually sweet and grand, had at first, no particular

meaning to Paxton. But as he listened his ears caught the words, "And there were in the same country shephards abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Impressed beyond description, Paxton fell upon his knees and prayed.

It seemed to be a case of mental or of heart telepathy, for Mrs. Paxton, who had noticed the same account of the disaster, no longer able to suppress her feeling, entered the study. Indeed, her struggle was greater than his. She was smitten by the consciousness of long neglected duty and a forgotten, if not a broken promise, as well. For had not she and Anna made covenants with each other in their early school days that through all the changes and vicissitudes of years to come, they would share each others fortunes. Three things were quite evident. First, that they had neglected their duty; second, that the consciousness of their duty, so neglected, smote their hearts and caused them pain, and third, that the duty should be neglected no longer. Anna's condition on the Island must be ascertained as quickly as possible. Another day must not pass without relief being sent to her. But Paxton was not satisfied with the thought of sending, he must go

to her himself. When the sense of neglected duty smites the true heart, that duty is never performed by proxy. Rushing to the telephone which was near his desk, he inquired as to the condition of the winter pass over Peril Reef and was informed, that although involving much danger, it might be crossed at early dawn.

It was a busy night for Calvin and Alice Paxton. Two boatmen were immediately engaged. Grocery and clothing centers were called up. Packages large, numerous and valuable were ordered sent to the boat-house—so numerous and varied that the boatmen became dazed, feeling that some mistake must have been made. After the experiences referred to, which were destined to change the tenor of Calvin Paxton's life, he lay him down upon his study cot-bed, for a few brief hours of sleep with an alarm clock at his ear.

CHAPTER III.

"What is you crying for, dear mama?" asked little Willie, looking intently into the sad, wan face of his breaking hearted mother, who, seated beside sick Bessie's bed, was bathing her burning brow. "You's cried a lot of times to-day, mama, and it makes me awful sorry to see you do it. What's the matter?" continued the dear child, who, although but five summers, was thoughtful beyond his years. "My dear baby," she replied, "I didn't intend that you should see me cry, but I was just thinking about papa; he left us a year ago to-night and——" "Yes, mama, I mind all about it. It was just two days afore Christmas (this was Willie's special reason for remembering) and papa came home from the grove with a little Christmas tree to hang my presents and Bessie's on, and just when he stood the tree by the door, he saw the ship going on the rocks. Then he gived me an awful quick kiss and run toward the beach and I didn't see him no more." "Poor papa! It's so lonesome since he's gone," sighed Willie, his words piercing still deeper into the heart of the grief stricken mother. Willie had not told his little tale until now and it only added a new pang of grief to the many which the mother had already endured. But Willie, in his childlike way, suddenly changed the subject by asking, "Mama, is we going to have no Christmas this year neither?" "I's heard a good bit about Santa Claus coming with presents to children, but why doesn't he

come to the Island?" Is it because we live so far from the land, mama?" "It is likely so, my dear, and I cannot promise you any Christmas gifts this year because we are so poor, and you know that on account of the long storm, the boatmen haven't been able to cross Peril Reef. If they get here to-morrow we may have a little something for Christmas, but," she added with a deep sigh, which the child did not understand, "I don't really expect them to-morrow." "Couldn't Santa Claus cross the water if he tried?" asked Willie, whose face took on a ray of sunshine. "Perhaps so, my dear, if he only thought of us and our con——" "But," interrupted Willie, "Can't Dod send him where he wants to?" "Certainly." "Then couldn't he send him safe across Peril Reef if He wanted to?" "He could, Willie." "And didn't you say, mama, that He does all the things we asks Him to?" "I did, dear." "Then mama, Santa Claus will be here," said Willie looking heavenward and waving his little hand in gesture, expressing wonderful confidence as he spoke. "Why do you feel so sure that he will come?" inquired the mother, impressed by the words of the child. "'Cause I's going to ask Dod to send him," said Willie, firmly and with a confidence which seemed to make it sure. It was only the faith of a little child, but it cheered the mother's sad heart.

Very quietly, in order not to waken sick Bessie, who had just fallen asleep, the loving mother prepared Willie for bed. She wished the dear children to have at least one more night of sleep, if they could have nothing

more. Indeed, it seemed to her that it might be the last night of sleep that they should ever get. She did not tell the children that their supper was meager because it was their all. But such was the sad fact. But Willie added a new sentence to his regular prayer, and the reader must see that there could be no hearer or answerer of prayer, in the universe, should the little petition, under such conditions, be ignored. This was the new sentence. "O Dod, please give Santa Claus courage to cross Peril Reef to-morrow, and bring us some little things, and mama won't cry no more—Dood Night."

"Poor little objects of fate," thought the saddened mother, as she looked upon the faces of her sleeping treasures, who knew not that they were face to face with starvation and possibly death.

"Dear little lambs of the desert, how shall I feed and defend you?" "No communication between the Island and the mainland, and little hope of there being any for several days; nothing in the house to sustain life—no, nothing. Could any situation be more precarious? Thus Mrs. Bryne's spirit sank within her and she began to grow despondent—I had almost said, desperate. She even wished that God would take her dear ones home to Himself that night. Why should they live to starve and die—anything but that, thought she. Were it not for them she could gladly fling her weary form into the sea surf and be at rest. "O for some way out of this sad condition!" she cried. "How cold and disloyal the world

has proven itself to be," reflected Mrs. Bryne. "Once I was flattered, because I was rich, but when riches fled, friends departed." And even the Old North seemed cold and distant to her who once moved in its most exclusive circles. She remembered that upon her last visit there, they did not seem to know her. Even Dr. and Mrs. Paxton were different. They did not ask her to their home. Then she recalled the days when Paxton had declared that even if he had a thousand lives he would lay them at her feet. But those were the days when she was wealthy and called beautiful, and when Paxton sought her hand in mariage. But now all was different. She was poor, care-worn, destitute, and no one seemed to love her. Not even Mrs. Paxton, once the beloved Alice, who was her most intimate friend and companion in their school days. They graduated in the same class; and had not she and Alice Brownlow pledged eternal friendship to each other, promising even to share each other's fortunes in life. But the unfortunate ones are usually the only ones who KEEP that kind of a contract.

Alice is Dr. Paxton's happy wife, while she, Mrs. Bryne, is alone, destitute and forgotten. She could not help recalling the fact also that more than once Paxton had informed her that he was especially indebted to her father for his position as pastor of the Old North Church. On fine Sabbath mornings she could hear the chimes of its great, rich bell coming to her over the placid waters; but its music lacked the sweetness of

former years. "O ungrateful world!" thought she, "would that I and my loved ones were no longer above your sod?" And again poor Mrs. Bryne began to grow desperate in her intensity. But she thought of Willie's prayer, with its unquestioning confidence and sweet simplicity, and she remembered how she had heard good Prof. Hammond once tell the children in Sunday School, the many and wonderful ways in which God had answered the prayers of little children. Could she not trust God even in this great crisis of life? Deliverance had come to others in all ages and conditions. Might it not come to her and her precious children even now? And was not she a little too severe in her criticism of the Old North? Perhaps it was, as she had often heard, simply oversight, rather than a disposition to be inhumane, or to forget any of their unfortunate members. She recalled times when the discovery of distress had surprised both pastor and people, and was promptly attended to then in the right, quiet and substantial way. One thing she was sure of, namely, that Doctor or Mrs. Paxton would not rest at ease that night if only they knew her real situation and the intensity of her grief. Thus calmed somewhat in spirit, she lay her weary head down beside her little ones and tried to sleep. But her mind was so active and so troubled, that of course she could not.

Something must be done at once, or the end was near. Then thought she of Paul Marlan, whose business it was to look after some government buildings and

attend the light on the Southwestern part of the Island. "But he is not likely there," thought she, "for that light is not now burning." If he was there, and knew of her distress, he would certainly have come to them, for were they not firm friends? Paul Marlan, though outwardly rough, was kind-hearted and true.

But even if he were not there, some provisions might be found in the house which would sustain life a little longer. However, she would go and see. This was her last hope, which, be it ever so feeble, is always sweet. A hard journey, indeed, through woods and drifted snow, but what is impossible where mother-love is the motive which prompts it? With this thought and its bit of sunshine Mrs. Bryne fell asleep and her dreams were pleasant. In vision she saw a bright and beautiful future, happy and prosperous, as in the days of yore. But, alas, she awoke to find that it was but a dream.

With the first faint quiver of light, Mrs. Bryne began preparing for the journey of life or death. Building a fire upon the hearth, she took from the shelf the last morsel of anything that might be called food, which was a little can of milk. This she placed near the fire to warm for the children. Then after explaining to Willie as best she could, where she was going, and for what, Mrs. Bryne passed out into the cold, bleak morning. Climbing the light-house ladder, she gazed intently across Peril Reef, toward the distant boat-house on the further side, but all seemed dreary and foreboding, no one was visible. Descending the steps of the long, slippery ladder, she started in the direction of Paul Marlan's house.

CHAPTER IV.

The sunbeams, like golden spears, are darting out of the bosom of the sea. Three men who at the peril of their lives, have battled hard with wind and tide, snow and drifting ice, are standing under the lee of Beacon Island, well nigh exhausted. These are Doctor Paxton and his two brave boatmen, Samuel Rand and Billy Bray. They were there when the widow climbed the light-house ladder—that is why she did not observe them. (The distance from the outmost point of Cape Tempest on Beacon Island is three and one half miles, Through the strait runs a swift current, carrying fields of floating ice. Ponds of water are every where upon the rough surface, making the journey difficult and dangerous.)

The work of transportation quickly began. With dog-sleds brought for the occasion, the great weight of valuable gifts were drawn towards the cottage. When Willie saw the Doctor in his great furs, the dogs and sleds, and the boatmen, his first thought was to conceal himself. But upon reflection, he grabbed the firetongs, and running to Bessie's bed-side, he stood there like a little hero, brave and defiant, determined to protect his sick sister from the invaders. The Doctor was deeply touched. With gentle words, while unwrapping some of the bundles, he gradually gained Willie's confidence. The child's face was a study. He looked intently at the Doctor, and then slowly dropped

the tongs, and approached step by step towards his benefactor.

"Please sir, is you Mr. Santa Claus?" asked Willie thoughtfully. "I am, my little man," promptly replied the Doctor, "Why do you ask?" "Cause," said Willie, "I asked Dod to send you to-night, and He went and sent you this morning. But we has nothing in the house to eat and Bessie's sick. We're awful hungry and I's glad he did send you." "Yes, my child, He has sent me," said the Doctor, with equal confidence, "But where is your mama?" Then Willie told him, as well as he could, where his mother had gone, and for what purpose. To say that the Doctor was greatly moved is putting it mildly. For now he saw the real situation. Truly his coming had rescued them from the jaws of death. Already the deeper meaning was beginning to dawn. Another day's delay, and then what? God! He could not bear to think.

The Doctor plans to give Mrs. Bryne a genuine surprise. The fire is rekindled, the chidren fed; the numerous and valuable presents are spread upon the table, hung upon the walls, and piled upon the floor. Already, in the deep enjoyment of his noble act, the Doctor is beginning to reap his rich reward.

At last, weary, and almost exhausted, utterly discouraged, Mrs. Bryne came trudging home. Under her arm a little package which she never had occasion to open. A half dozen mouldy hard-tack was all that she could find at Paul's house, and he was gone. Another

storm is gathering upon the horizon, but the greater storm is within. With her loved ones, she stands upon the brink of eternity. God, how can she bear to see them starve to death! She must not—nay, that night, she must somehow take her unfortunate little treasures and go home to meet the God whose ways have so puzzled her. But O, how can this be accomplished? Her own case is easy, but her dear ones—must she end their pain, or see them starve to death? Truly she is in a strait betwixt two. The situation is tragic, but she must meet the inevitable. Her cause is just and God is responsible. Of the future she has no fear, her only fear is for the present.

She saw not the Christmas angels who had come on foot rather than on wings. She did not dream of any one being there. With sad heart she approached the dreary dwelling; exhausted and strengthless she fell against the door landing upon the floor as one out of whom life has departed. As consciousness returns the strong arms of her benefactor are beneath her and Mrs. Bryne opens her eyes to behold one whom she has seen before.

The effect of her surprise can never be told in words. Had she come to the wrong place, or had God answered her prayer and taken the poor widow and her dear children to heaven? For indeed, it looked like a little piece of heaven lowered down to earth. The fire is blazing bright and warm upon the hearth, the walls are hung with beautiful things—clothing for the children and

herself—nothing is lacking or inferior, all is new. The table is daintily spread with substantial food and a variety of delicacies. There is turkey, fat and heavy, rolls, pies, bread, cakes as big as cart wheels, and puddings with to use Willie's words "a pum in every bite." There are bundles upon the floor, and what not? The Doctor and his men had concealed themselves in order to witness the effect of the surprise, and in the end they were not disappointed.

CHAPTER V.

It was a day of retrospection and of hope. Together, Dr. Paxton and Mrs. Bryne reviewed the past, with its varied experience and planned for the future. It was a blessed day and one never to be forgotten. Bessie's severe sickness, however, flung its shadow upon the brightness. Her illness seemed unto death. Dr. Paxton had already dispatched the boatmen with a message to bring the family physician who was requested to come at once, even at the risk of his life.

Paxton became somewhat worried about his sermon on the Incarnation, for the day was drawing to its close and the chance for his return seemed hopeless. The sun sank into a cloud, the day was fading into the night, and it was quite evident that another storm was pending. Night was fast approaching. In the distance the storm was already visible. No boatmen came, and there was no communication with the mainland for that night, at least. Paxton grew still more worried and nervous. The next day was Christmas eve and his sermon unprepared. He could picture the vast, cultured audience before him, and he unprepared to meet it. Besides all this, the theological review was waiting for the manuscript of that particular discourse. It was partly on account of their request that he started to write it. But why did he not send the boatmen, instead of coming himself? True he was in the line of duty, in a sense, but duty often marks her paths in two directions, and

could he not have accomplished his duty still more fully by sending the boatmen to look after the suffering ones, and himself remaining in his study? What would the congregation think, and what might the church do when it learned that its pastor was absent on a mere plea of charity? How quickly would they remind him that they were paying their thousands annually for the support of associated charities, whose business it was to look after all such matters. He was the minister of the Old North, not a charity worker. His mission was to preach to a cultured congregation. That was all they asked of him, and that they certainly had a right to expect. And he wondered if after all their argument was not a bona fide one,—for he was not his own, he was bought with a price—a very high price too—$12,000 a year, an elegant parsonage, and a long vacation in Europe.

But once more the better side of Paxton's manhood asserted itself. He thought of the joy that had already come to him in the preformance of this blessed duty—a duty too long, and too shamefully neglected. He thought also of Wm. Wholeheart's beautiful words and these made him feel more reconciled. Had he not responded to Prof. Hammon's request, according to his wife's suggestion, he would not have come to Beacon Island, and therefore he could not have rescued these precious lives from death. The sermon on the Incarnation would undoubtedly have been written, strong and convincing, but it would have been the price of blood.

This now appealed to him as his real duty and he resolved to continue manfully unto the end. He would stay by his friend and her little children that night and another too, if the sermon on the Incarnation should never be written. He would stay there until Bessie was dead or better, if it cost him the pulpit of the Old North.

In the strength of this noble resolve, he became more reconciled, and sat down to read; taking out a pocket testament, he happened to open at the words, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit to be tempted of the devil, who showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and said, All these things will I give you if thou wilt fall down and worship me. But Jesus said, Get thee hence Satan, for it is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but from every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. And immediately Satan left Him and angels came and ministered unto Him." Again he opened to the story of a poor widow, who had once cast two little mites into the Lord's treasury, and who, for her act of loving devotion, had received her Lord's approval and blessing in greater measure than the wealthy Sadducees and Pharisees. Once more he opened to the words, "For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him."

The storm without is raging, the whirling snow is drifting about the windows, the sea, like a mighty foaming monster, is dashing against the rocks and ice, but the little home is warm and bright. For one night, at

least, it had a brave defender, a strong and able comforter. At last the storm began to abate. Now and again, a few pale moonbeams slipping through a rift in the clouds peeped in through the window. Bessie, who seemed a little better, had fallen asleep. Mrs. Bryne pled with the Doctor to lie down and rest, promising to call him if the child grew worse. As on the previous night, it was high twelve o'clock when Dr. Paxton spread his fur coat in a corner on the floor, and lay him down to rest. But this time not in an elegant study, in a beautiful parsonage, but in a lonely cottage, on a dreary, storm-beaten speck in the sea, with an unopened bundle of Christmas presents under his head for a pillow.

CHAPTER VI.

"Glory, wonderful glory!" shouted Paxton as he awoke, to behold the light of the morning. "Am I awake, or am I dreaming?" Mrs. Bryne was in the kitchen at this time. Thinking that something unusual had happened, she cried, "Calvin, what is it?" using his first name unconsciously. "I hope you are not ill." "No, Anna," he replied, "Not ill, but O! I have had a vision, a strange vision. Through all eternity I shall praise God for having sent me last night to this lonely spot. It has proven to be my Patmos! What I have seen I cannot tell you now, and possibly I may never be able in the language of the world to describe it. I have spent at least one night in God's real school of divinity. I have seen the glories of that better world, and henceforth I am a changed man,—changed in life and in doctrine—in doctrine, because in life. All the petty distinctions and barriers which have engaged my attention hitherto, have melted away and disappeared and the insight for which I so long have studied has come at last. Not from the study or from the books, but in the line of humble and blessed duty and straight from heaven and God. Now I see that the only real Incarnation is the Incarnation of Love in the human heart, flowing out in deeds of kindness unto suffering humanity."

As Paxton went on to unfold this wonderful vision, Mrs. Bryne sat entranced with wonder and delight. Some how she had felt that night that heaven was very near to earth and she believed the vision to be a real revelation from God.

CHAPTER VII.

I can give little, if any, encouragement, Mrs. Bryne," said Dr. Rolph, who, with the boatmen had just arrived. He had diagnosed Bessie's case and was prescribing something to counteract the fever. "She is a very sick child, and her fever has run long and high. However, I will do my best. All that I can now say is that there is perhaps an even chance." Doctor Rolph could never deceive and in his frank way he always stated cases just as they were.

After a long and earnest conversation with his friend, Paxton, Doctor Rolph agreed to remain over night, as Doctor Paxton felt obliged to meet his congregation on the morrow, especially as he now had a new and a more blessed message to impart. "O Paxton, pardon me," said Dr. Rolph, as the Doctor was about to depart; "I came nearly forgetting; I have a note from Mrs. Paxton to you." Paxton took the note and read as follows:

"Dear Calvin: When I was informed of the real situation on the Island, as conveyed to me by the boatmen, I felt that we can never thank God enough that you were moved to go there and especially should we be thankful for the circumstances which have led to your going (Here of course, she referred to the note of Prof. Hammond.) My conscience has been so pricked by the sense of long neglected duty that I feel that we must do still more for dear Alice and her children, for only in this way can we atone for the negligence of the past.

We must suffer her to remain no longer on that lone and dreary Island. Since your going, I have wondered how this could be accomplished and have prayed that some way might quickly be opened. Well, to be brief, the way has been opened.

Our governess has just announced her intention of being married and has given in her notice, to take effect on the first of January. Now will Alice accept the position? If so, she will not be my servant, but my companion and friend, as in the days of old. I will help her to do the work with my own hands. Her children will be our children and go to our own school. With her fine accomplishments and great experience, she will be a blessing in our home, and you know, my dear, how much at home we will strive to make her feel. Constrain her to come. Indeed, I seem to feel that she is here now. Tell her therefore, not to let me be disappointed, Lovingly, Alice."

The effect of this letter was very marked. Mrs. Bryne could not contain her feelings. The Doctor and his friend were likewise deeply moved. At last a way was opened out of all her grief and worry; only Bessie's sickness seemed to hinder. But the Doctor found her fast recovering and already he had given Mrs. Bryne encouragement and this, from Dr. Rolph, meant much. With his heart filled with love, his mind illumined by the beautiful vision, his soul on fire with a new and burning zeal in behalf of suffering humanity, Paxton left for home, to meet his congregation on Christmas morning.

CHAPTER VIII.

When Mrs. Paxton met her husband at the door that night, he was not the worn and weary person whom she had expected to see. On the contrary, he seemed to be refreshed and happy. His face shone as with an inner light and his heart was full of cheer. He seemed to be like a new man—for so, indeed, he was. Mrs. Paxton knew quite well that her husband was coming, for she kept in constant telephone communication with the boat-house. She did not expect however, that he intended to preach on the Christmas Sabbath morning, for she knew that his sermon was unprepared, and the one thing, which above all others Dr. Paxton would not attempt to do, was to preach unprepared. She supposed that he had already made arrangements with President Ellery of Hadding University, to preach for him, as was his custom when absent.

Their meeting was as of lovers, who had for a long time been separated. And so in experience they had been. In the study, Paxton told his wife the strange, sweet story of all that had taken place on that memorable night; of the revelation which had come to him from heaven. Of the revolution which it had wrought in his thinking and the change which had come into his life. He had been brought to a realizing sense of his great mistake which was the cause of what he now deemed to be the failure of his life. He saw now that he had been too dogmatic in his preaching,—too doctrinal,

too uncharitable toward those who differed from him, and too severe. Now he was ready to confess it and to set up for the future a different standard. He would be true to the heavenly vision by being true to suffering humanity.

Nothing could have delighted Mrs. Paxton more, she had long known that her husband's views were far behind the better thinking of his age and the wants of his people, who were literally starving for a real gospel. But she had refrained from mentioning this to her husband because she knew that it would meet with prompt disapproval. He was conscientious in his thinking and true to his convictions. He felt that it was in his mission to be true to the faith once delivered to the saints, and to this end he was willing, if need be, to have his name inscribed upon the roll of martyrs.

It was a most blessed experience; never before did that study seem to have so much of Christ and heaven in it. Again the great organ began to peal forth and the choir to sing as beautifully as upon the night before when Paxton read the note from Prof. Hammond. But this time the meaning was more fully understood. "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field keeping watch over their flocks by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the Angel said unto them, Fear not; For behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in

the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

Paxton and his wife were stirred to their deepest. They looked into each others faces, but neither one could speak. Speech seemed to be empty and meaningless, for heaven indeed was there. Clasping each other in a fond embrace, as if moved together by the same holy impulse, they kneeled upon the study floor and prayed. The organ was playing soft and sweet. The voices of the singers seemed to Paxton to sound more like those of the glorified beings, whom, with other ears and eyes, he had seen and heard the night before. And there, in the quiet of that study, now so close to heaven, Rev. Calvin andMrs. Paxton, dedicated themselves anew to the service of God and humanity.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

Another Christmas Sabbath has dawned in beauty upon the world. The bells peal forth their sweetest chimes to usher in the joyous day. Never did the chimes of the Old North sound half so beautiful. The world to Paxton was a new world with new meaning. The morning prayer was not read from a book; it was a simple little story straight from the heart which Paxton sent up to heaven. Beautifully he remembered the dear ones on the dreary Island,—the mother, the children, and especially the sick little Bessie. And this led him to remember all others in similar conditions, in a world of grief. His prayer was direct, sweet and simple, like that of a little child.

As the organ voluntary began that morning in the Old North, an unusually large and fashionable audience filled every available spot in the great edifice. For of course they were anticipating something grand in music, as also from the lips of the learned preacher.

At last the fine figure of Dr. Paxton appeared upon the platform, clad as usual, in a black silken robe, which the Old North required its preacher to wear. But many

noticed the absence of the manuscript which, in a fine, dark cover, the Doctor always held in both hands, as though his very life were dependent upon it,—and it was. His face was a study. Now it seemed almost sweeps over it, as sunlight and shadow playing upon some beautiful landscape. Those who knew Paxton best, felt that something unusual had occured, or was about to, and they were not disappointed.

After the Christmas song, so exquisitely rendered, Doctor Paxton arose to speak, but it was not the sermon which three days ago he had outlined in his study. That sermon was never written. The Doctor at once took the great mulititude into his confidence, as though they had been a few, long trusted and well beloved friends, and they also took the pastor to their heart. In a few touching words, he unfolded a brief outline of the strange experiences through which he had passed. A wave of genuine delight swept over the entire congregation, as he spoke of the experiences which had revolutionized his thinking and changed his life. Henceforth, he would preach the beautiful Christ-life in its simplicity, and strength in relation to every day life and duty, rather than a cold, lifeless and antiquated system of theology, which he had decided to abandon forever. At this announcement, the great multitude broke forth into applause, but with uplifted hand, the Doctor quickly suppressed it.

It was quite evident, however, that his announcement did not meet with entire approval. Deacon Em-

mons Flint, who sat directly in front of the Doctor, and a few others, wore a look of sadness, and of worry, for they had long prided themselves upon being a bulwark of orthodoxy, while their pastor was its strongest defender. Now they seemed to feel that they were on a stranded ship, which was fast drifting toward the breakers and rocks. Flint had been for years the leading Deacon in the church and really felt that the church could not exist without him, and there were a few others in the congregation of the Flint type—a few, who, with the ruling deacon, decided in their minds, that Paxton must immediately be dealt with, while a few others wept, for they really thought that their pastor's mind was giving away. But the feeling, as a whole, was one of universal approval, of genuine rejoicing. It was like that of a warm gulf stream coursing through the heart of a cold ocean.

As Paxton began to describe the glory of the heavenly vision, all was still as death. This was evidence of the reality of his experience, for they well knew that hitherto he had been almost destitute of the visionary faculty and even of the power of description. But we will let Paxton relate his story in his own words:

"My dear people," he began, and on his face there shone a light, pure and beautiful, as from another sun. "The strange experience which I am about to relate, will be, I am sure, a great surprise to you all, especially to those of you who know me best. To stand before this congregation, and to unfold out of the depths of

my own experience, the glory and beauty of a heavenly vision, was something hitherto the most remote from my thought, for this power you know was not my possession. The lack of insight has always been my greatest limitation, and the source of deepest regret. How long and how earnestly I have labored to unfold the deeper truth of God, you may never know, and I shall not undertake to say. If the study of books and theories and close conformity to creeds and doctrines could have given me this insight, it would have been mine long since. Only within the past two days have I discovered the chief source of my failure and loss. The thing that I have most longed for has been power to reveal more fully and accurately the beauties of the Christ-life,—God in man—the Incarnation. To-day I find myself before you with no doctrinal sermon, but I believe, nevertheless, that I bring to you a deeper and a diviner message. I have received a gleam from that sun which alone illumnies and gives insight. In brief, I have received in a night, that for which I long have sought in vain. Not from the works of the fathers, however, not in yonder study, not from the grand halls of learning which I still respect and which form so great a part of our life here, but in the path of humble, sweet, and long neglected duty. In ministering unto the earthly needs of the poor, as well as unto the spiritual needs of the rich. I have received this blessing upon a lonely Island in the sea, through a vision, by which my thought has been completely revolutionized, my heart

annealed, my life humanized, transformed and dedicated anew to the service of humanity and therefore to the service of God.

"If I were a painter, I should endeavor to make this the masterpiece of my life, so that beholding humanity might stand entranced and inspired by its beauty. If I were a musician, I should strive to give it expression in the sweetest strains of music ever heard; if I were a singer, I should endeavor to unfold the glories of the better land in the sweetest and sublimest notes. But these are not my gifts; therefore, I must rely upon what now seems to me, as never before, to be the poor media of human speech. For the dearest thoughts that come from God to man are those which burst through language and escape." As the Doctor spoke these words, not only did his face become luminous, but his voice grew wondrously rich and melodious, and all felt that truly he had been with God.

"I was upon Beacon Island," he continued "that lonely, cold and boisterous speck in the ocean; I was there upon the mission of mercy already referred to, having sacrificed preference to duty, the comforts of the home and study for humanity's sake. It was midnight in a lowly cot. A mother and her little children, one sick possibly unto death, are there. Weary of the hard and perilous journey, for we well nigh lost our lives in crossing Peril Reef, I lay me down to rest and sleep. But lo! I awoke upon a world of wonderful magnificence and surpassing loveliness. My vision was clarified

my eyes open to sights which defy description and my ears to sounds never heard on earth. I heard music unspeakably grand.

"The atmosphere was so clear, that objects thousands of miles in the distance were plainly visible as though near at hand. Its mountains rose in awful and solemn grandeur, clothed in ever changing light and beauty. I had read the Peasant's dream,—how that while he slept his humble cottage arose into a grand and noble palace; and through windows, arched and beautiful, he looked out upon vast estates which were all his own. How the fireplace became an altar, overshadowed by seraphim; the chimmey a golden ladder on which his children, living and dead, passed like heavenly visitors, to and from the worlds of light, bringing beautiful gifts. And I had thougth such visions worthless! But now I see their mission, their meaning and their significance. Every one can have his Peasants's dream if he will. Every one may have his Patmos, too, and God has given mine to me."

Here Doctor Paxton cited many interesting cases, showing that in the olden days people were guided largely by visions and dreams, and still, he declared they form an important part of our life, still our ideals are brought down from the mountains and the light and beauty of heaven, by which earth is illumined and beautified, are seen from the dark and lonely places of the earth. "But, 'he continued,' "as our dear friend, William Wholeheart, told us, so recently, in words of won-

derful strength and beauty, the light of heaven dawns only on the souls who minister unto those who are lost in the shadows; in the lowly path of duty, the light of heaven gleams, and on my darkness the light has sweetly dawned. Once I was blind, but now I see. The curtain of time rolled up, the theater of heaven revealed, the ever green mountains shining beautifully in the light of God. The valleys of rest, and peace and flowers—the arbutus, the violet, the pale lady tresses, cyclamens, and thousands I had never seen, in fadeless beauty and sweet perfume—rippling streams of health and trees of healing, light in ever changing colors, which never weary and ever charm, so beautiful, so healing in its nature, caused by the revolutions of those great and glorious worlds in space, which are clearly seen as though they were near by; beings large and perfect—the loved ones from whom on earth we have been torn apart, grown to the proportions of heaven and into the likeness of God; faces glowing with perfect health and delight, eyes beaming with love and tenderness and trust, such is heaven, when seen in its own light, but who, indeed, can paint its beauties or tell of its delights in the language of the world? Its glories are beyond the powers of speech to portray. The beauties of the rose, the rich colors of the violet, the exquisite painting of the sea shell, the avalanche tumbling into a myriad sparkling crystals, the rythmic splendors of the arched skies, all that is grandest and most beautiful on earth, are but faint reflections of the beauty of heaven as seen in the light of God. And I can say with Bulwer:

"'Brighter than the golden sun sets
Which delight this earthly clime;
Than the splendors of the dawning,
Passing o'er the hills sublime,
Is the richness of the radiance
Of the land beyond the sun,
Where the noble have their country,
When the work of life is done.'

"And this leads me to behold gems of truth and beauty in the heathen philosophies for which, hitherto, I have had only contempt.

"It seemed to be the first Chrstmas eve, and it began in heaven. In a fragrant valley, surrounded by the ever green mountains of eternal life where the streams of health and healing flow down from the city of God, I was in the presence of the shining host who minister on earth to the heirs of glory. They seemed to be speaking of their mission to a world of grief, and O, it was blessed to hear them. From them I learned the real meaning of the great controling influences in the history of mankind, namely, War, Wisdom, Law and Love. The first, they contended, had accomplished its purpose. The last was to transform the second, and the third was to set the first forever aside. The angel of battle related the sad story of earth during his ministry; the angels of Wisdom informed the great company of the achievements and failures of knowledege, as the influence of war upon the conquerers themselves was such as to be deplored, so Wisdom had failed to redeem even the wisest of man-

kind. Wisdom had indeed made the world more beautiful. It had made marble breathe and canvas, speak and man adore, but the time had arrived for a grander revelation to the world, for a deeper and a diviner influence upon the human heart. More of heaven must come to earth—the heart of man must come into closer touch with the heart of God. The stream of eternal life must flow down from heaven to refresh and beautify the world. The time had come for the law of Love. Earth must be ruled henceforth as heaven is.

"Thus it dawned upon ny illumnied vision that earth is but a reflection of heaven, where men think and feel as angels do. And now I know that even angels desire to look into the deep things of God. I have learned also how the Christ laid aside his robes of heaven, and leaped into the arena of the world. The Incarnation is no longer a mystery, for it is seen from the light which shines from within. It is only the mystery of loving sympathy which one life imparts unto other lives. As we imagine ourselves in the place of others, living their lives, feeling with their hearts, seeing through their eyes, bearing their burdens and sharing their grief, so we incarnate ourselves in humanity, and this is what the Christ did in a higher degree. He remained in heaven, but he sent froth his life to be revealed first in a sweet boy, who receieved the Christ spirit—the Incarnation—on that day when he heard the Father's voice bidding him be about his Father's business and obeyed it. After the death of the

man, Jesus, who was a real Incarnation in human form of the Christ in heaven, his spirit passed into humanity, where it continues to reveal itself in ever increasing strength and beauty, as the years go on.

"First in a single man, Jesus the Nazarine, did the Christ reveal himself from heaven, but now his spirit entered into all men, bidding them live according to that perfect example, until they become like him and see him as He is. So each one of us has another and a better self in another and a better world. This is his real self, for 'the soul that riseth with us here, our life star hath had elsewhere its setting and cometh from afar.' Such dear ones, is the vision which has come to me in the only way that such a vision can come, as our dear Wholeheart told us so beautifully not long since—in the path of humble, loving service,—a vision which has revolutionized my thinking, and changed my life, and which will continue to guide me and all who may follow me through the years to come, in that path which Jesus trod, the path of humble duty, the path of loving obedience, the path of sweet humility."

As Paxton closed this strange discourse, so utterly foreign to anything which he had produced hitherto, profound silence reigned. Faculty, and Students, Professors and people were alike impressed. President Ellery leaned his noble head upon his hand during the discourse and seemed to be engaged in silent prayer. On Prof. Hammond's face tears glistened, and from his eyes there beamed the sweet light of sympathy and

gladness. But Flint was fidgetly and even showed signs of anger. He rolled his flashing eyes around like search lights in order to detect the influence of what he regarded as such pernicious doctrine, upon the congregation, and his discovery grieved him more. After the choir, in soft, sweet tones, had sung the closing anthem, and the great congregation past out. Few words were exchanged. It was discovered, however, that Flint was really angry. He found among the great mulititude only three or four sympathizers, and these were persons of a very low order of intellect, and still lower order of character and life.

Only a few days previous, Flint had consulted his pastor with reference to getting these same men out of the church, declaring that they were a stain upon its character,—but now they accompanied him in his misery,—he even strikes hands with them against his pastor, because he feels that it is his duty to defend the faith once delivered to the saints. Nothing but doctrinal differences could have separated between Dr. Paxton and Deacon Flint or have broken their friendship. How can these things be? Why will one sacrifice everything that is beautiful and true for the defense of a dogma from which the breath of life has departed? Flint saw no good or beautiful side to the change which had come into Paxton's life. He was not thinking of this act of humanity which had been accomplished. Indeed, he heartily wished that Beacon Island had disappeared in the sea and that Prof. Hammond had been sleeping in-

stead of writing the note, which was the means of alluring his pastor and his church from the true faith. Yesterday there was nothing within the bounds of reason that Flint would not have done to help his pastor. But to-day he seemed to be willing to stoop to any depth and join hands with those for whom at heart he had nought but contempt against the man who has thus departed from the "true faith." Alas how can it be? Only because religious fellowship is the dearest and sweetest of all fellowships, and for this reason religious disagreements are the most bitter. The brighter the light, the darker the shadow which it casts.

But good old Sally Hobson, Flint's colored wash woman, was nearest the truth, when, in her conversation with some one, her remarks upon Flint's comments were heard and reported. "I knows mighty little bout doctrine," she said, "and cares less, but one thing I does know, I'se seen plenty religion in dis yere house for de last ten year, and moh, but we'se nevah seen one speck of de kind of Christianity which de deah man talked to-day. In de church day makes me set under de back staers in de galary and only dare with de promise ter Flint dat Ide go in arley afore de sarvice begun and slips out when day wor a singin de last tune. It makes me pore, sore ol' heart feel as do it ware a healin' up to heah a word spoke in de intres of de pore, an' to know dat heah aftah dere goin' to have a bit of considerization. 'Clar,—seems do de millendiam war a comin' to de world. I should think

dat saints on dar way to pardise would mos' have to stop at purgatory to listen to dat ar' kind of talk. Masr Paxton may not any more have Deacon Flint's kind of religion,—an' de Lawd knows we's had 'nough of dat—but I's willin' to wagah my wash-tub dat dere be more genuwine religion, hereonwards, in de deah man's little toe, don der been in his whole body frough all the hindermost part of his life." And Sally was right.

Since the occurence of this strange event, many years have come and gone. The Old North Church has become a life giving center and a source of power. Streams of benevolence and of life flow out from her in all directions. She has become, as it were, a great heart in a center of a system from whence the streams of warm life blood are borne along many bounding arteries, to be distributed, to every member, according to its need. It has risen like a sun in the moral heavens, to pour its sweet light and healing beams into the darkest lives, into the cold, sore hearts, to brighten, to heal, to restore and to cheer them. And she has found abundant opportunity for such service, even in her own locality and among her own members. For when the great congregation, in response to the pastor's invitation, assembled on the Wednesday of the following week, to re-dedicate themselves to God by consecrating themselves to the service of humanity, the revelations of even a week's service were astounding and humiliating. Misfortune, distress and grief were discovered among their own members, even on Mansion Park and Forrest Avenue, in

High and Belden Streets. Oh! if they had only known. Where was Richard Bardon and his partner, John Fleming, once so active, so kindhearted and benevolent and whose names were still on the roll? Some one remembered that they had failed in business, many remembered that they had dropped out, still others had heard that the former died in the poor-hospital, and the latter was lying at the point of death in the same place. Oh! if they had only known.

Where was the dear and charitable Mrs. Benson, once so active in all the organizations of the women of the church, she who had done so much to help uplift suffering humanity? Certainly she was not in the beautiful home in Mansion Park—only a block away. Nay, for that home was wrested out of her hands long ago by some, alas, whose names were on the same church roll. Some knew that she was driven to the keeping of a lodging house in New York City, and on account of an heroic effort to support her beautiful family, she had lost her health and was really in distress. Oh! if they had only known! And were was the handsome and charming girl, Jennie Lee, who in childhood was the sweetest little bud in that garden of flowers? They recalled how her little recitations and songs had cheered the Sunday-school concerts, and who, after she had grown up and become educated in music, a singer of note, had charmed and blessed the great congregation. A little misfortune had caused her to be treated coldly by the church and so she had dropped out and drifted away—

away. Where was she, where was she? Dear Prof. Hammond went in seach of her, as a father in searching for a lost child. He was fortunate in tracing her, and found her, but Lord!—I cannot tell you where. Loved for her beauty and worshiped for her talents, she was likewise shunned on account of some trivial offence, and she too, had dropped out and drifted into the stream of death towards the fatal plunge. But she longed to come back. When she saw Prof. Hammond, her dear old Sunday School teacher of former days, she rushed to his arms, she covered his hands with kisses and with tears—tears that burned his heart.

When he related some of these things to the congregation there assembled, Hammond, though a man of remarkable self control, broke down and wept, and the great congregation wept audibly, even men sobbed aloud, Oh! if they had only known, if they had only known! Out from their hearts came pity, out from their eyes came tears, but better than all, out from their treasures came thousands and even hundreds of thousands to inaugurate a work such as they had not seen, but such as every Christian church should do for Christ and humanities' sake. Such a revival was never seen before, a revival of humanity, and its influence will bless the world for all time to come.

The Old North Church is now known the world around. Paxton has become a noted preacher in the truest sense. For his writings he receives a greater income than before, which is all donated to the cause of

humanity. Associated with him in his great work, are many pastors and laymen. Rev. William Wholeheart has become his co-pastor. Thousands flock to hear these men of God. Every Sunday afternoon the great choir divides, going to many lowly spots to thrill and bless the humble ones with their sweet music. Wholeheart's former church is never forgotten for he and Paxton preach there in turn, going and returning on the fast electric line which has been extended from Lone Valley to the City of Allendale.

Paxton's mind is the center of a new and living theology, a theology that admits man, as well as God. His library is the receptical of another kind of books. Not the dead bodies of the past, but the "precious life blood of many a master spirit."

Anna Bennigton Brine has become the happy wife of Arthur Bradlaw, a prosperous business man, a former member of her father's Sunday School class, and who gladly attributes his success in life to the wise counsel of Mr. Bennington. Bessie, a sweet girl of seventeen, and exceptionally bright and talented, has become a Freshman at Wellesley. Willie, an equally bright and beautiful boy, still displaying the same good judgment which we noticed in his childhood, is being fitted for Harvard College. As Anna and her beautiful children occupy the same pew which she did in the days of her father's prosperity, her face wears an expression of genuine happiness. Her past seems like a strange dream that has faded away in the light of the new morning,

for her present is full of sunshine and the future is radiant with hope. As Dr. Paxton glances from his grand pulpit down into those kindly eyes, which ever beam with tender light and love upon their precious benefactor, many persons fancy that they behold in his face a soft, sweet light, as from another sun; but he takes not the glory to himself,—nay, for his glance now falls upon Prof. Hammond at his left who came to him on that memorable night with a message from God, now upon dear Wm. Wholeheart at his side, whose wise counsel and sweet spirit is still a source of inspiration to him and also on his own dear Alice, who, by reason of that note suggested the outline referred to, which revolutionized Dr. Paxton's thinking and changed the course of his life. Through all eternity, Paxton and his great and grateful people, will never cease to thank heaven for that ever to be remembered night spent upon the lonely island in the sea, no longer known as Beacon Island, but Calvin Paxton's Patmos.

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